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Election Contingency and Disaster Planning

Contingency and disaster planning is a vital tool in the election day planning process. Each county election administrator should have a contingency and disaster plan on file. Following is an outline to help prepare a contingency and disaster plan.

1. Identify potential types of disasters and/or contingencies, and draft a plan for each potential disaster:
 - a. Natural Disaster (snow/ice, flooding, tornado, fire, etc.)
 - b. Health-Related Disaster (influenza outbreak, etc.)
 - c. Unexpected Poll Worker Shortage
 - d. Shortage of Ballots or other Critical Supplies
 - e. Phone System Crash
 - f. Bomb Threat
 - g. Power Failure (election office, polling place, etc.)
 - h. Internet Connection Problem
2. Develop and put in writing a line of succession for staffing the election office.
3. Designate staff responsible for each task in the event of a disaster or contingency.
4. Identify agencies who can assist with a disaster or contingency.
 - a. Create a list of key contact people for any identified agencies.
5. Compile emergency contact information to include key personnel and after hours contact information for:
 - a. Disaster and Emergency Coordinator
 - b. Law enforcement
 - c. Fire department
 - d. Phone company
 - e. Internet provider
 - f. Health department
6. See "Polling Place Relocation Checklist" form (attached) if you need to do an emergency relocation of a polling place.
7. Sample Plan is attached.



Polling Place Relocation Procedures Checklist

Chief election judge or polling place manager will use this checklist in the event of an emergency that requires relocation of the polling place. This checklist is a sample only. Please modify as necessary for county-specific procedures.

FOR USE BY CHIEF ELECTION JUDGE OR POLLING PLACE MANAGER AT POLLING PLACE IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

1. Is there an immediate threat to the safety of voters and election judges?

If so, evacuate voters and judges, then call 911 immediately.

2. If there is not an immediate safety threat:

- ☐ Contact the County Clerk and Recorder at (insert phone number): _____
- ☐ Evacuate voters in a calm manner. Let voters who have a ballot finish voting, unless threat is imminent
- ☐ Seal and secure ballots for transport
- ☐ Before you turn off voting machines, note the number of ballots on each machine so that the number can be verified at the new location
- ☐ Secure voting equipment and prepare for transport
- ☐ Transport equipment and supplies to your designated relocation area using bi-partisan teams of judges
- ☐ Post Polling Place Relocation Signs where they are easily visible at evacuated polling place
- ☐ Set up machines, ballots and other supplies at the new polling place
- ☐ Verify that seals on equipment and ballot boxes are intact
- ☐ After voting machines are turned on, verify that the number of ballots on each machine is the same. New "zero" tapes are not required
- ☐ Resume voting as quickly as possible
- ☐ Contact the County Clerk when relocation is complete

SAMPLE PLAN

| Natural Disaster | Task List | Staff Responsible for Task | Assisting Agency(s) | Emergency Contact | After Hours Contact |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Health-Related Disaster | Set up protocol for polling places. | Election Administrator | DES | Duane Winslow 444-5555 | Duane Winslow 434-5555 |
| | Contact public health department | Election Administrator | Public Health | | |
| | Publish/post warning notices to public | Election Staff | NA | NA | NA |
| Poll Worker Shortage | Call back-up poll workers | Deputy Election Administrator | | | |
| | Instructions to poll workers who may be short-staffed | Election Administrator | | | |
| Ballot/Supply Shortage | Contact election administrator | Chief Election Judge | | | |
| | Copy sufficient number of ballots; hand-number; give voting instructions to poll workers (must vote and tabulate by hand, etc.) | Election Administrator | | | |
| | Amend ballot reports to indicate additional ballots | Election Administrator | | | |
| Phone System Crash | Notify phone service provider | Deputy Election Administrator | | | |
| | Notify Secretary of State elections | Election Administrator (use cell) | | | |
| | Notify public | | | | |
| | Provide cell phones if applicable | | | | |
| Bomb Threat | Clear election office/polling place if imminent | Law Enforcement or Chief Election Judge | | | |

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|-------------------------|---|---|--|--|--|
| | Contact law enforcement | Election Administrator or Chief Election Judge | | | |
| Power Failure | Contact election administrator Contact SOS election office Contact power service provider Have instructions for poll workers on how to vote manually Have plan for issuing ballots manually | Chief Election Judge Election Administrator | | | |
| Internet Problem | Contact SOS Elections division Contact internet service provider Have plan for issuing ballots manually | Election Administrator County IT Manager Election Administrator | | | |